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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. 50X1

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Pravda for 20 Mar 53 carries an article by Zemtsov, its Alma Ata correspondent, entitled "Volga-Ural". This article describes the economic effect that the canal will have when completed and comments on the unsatisfactory attitude on the part of a number of managerial personnel toward the construction project. Using this article and certain other information [redacted] the following comments on this project:
2. In May 1952 work was begun in digging the channel for the 600-kilometer Volga-Ural Canal. The water is to be taken from the dam reservoir above Stalingrad and will flow by gravity parallel with the left bank of the Volga, along western Kazakhstan, along the north Caspian plain to the Ural River in the region of the town of Kulagino (55.12 N; 32.35 E).
3. Climatic conditions in the area of the canal are extremely severe at the present time 1953. In Gurev, for example, annual precipitation is only 160 millimeters. On the north Caspian plain, the rate of evaporation is three to four times the rate of precipitation. The rivers have little water and dry up completely in the summer. In some areas along the left bank of the Volga (Zavolzhye) half the population is occupied in getting water out of the wells, and when the wells dry up they have to move to a different locality. In this region there has even appeared a tendency to take up nomadic animal husbandry.

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4. The future canal will take 400 cubic meters of water per second from the Volga. According to preliminary figures, no less than 2,000 kilometers of irrigation canals will go up and down from the main canal. The canal will be navigable and will be equipped with pumping stations, sprinkling equipment, bridges, dams, and locks. It is expected that as a result of the canal 1.5 million hectares of soil will be irrigated north of the canal, while in the north Caspian Plain (Priekaspiyskaya Nizmennost), between the Volga and the Ural, about 6.5 million hectares of ground will be supplied with water for general uses. This will make it possible to cultivate wheat, sugar beets, cotton, rice and fodder for livestock. Calculations by specialists indicate that by irrigating and supplying water to the north Caspian plain it will be possible to increase the hay yield six to seven times what it is at present without sprinkling.
5. In 1953, the scope of the work on the Stalingrad Main Canal grew significantly. Two hundred powerful excavators and other earth-digging machines are in use. Completion of the canal will involve eight times as much excavation as was done on the Volga-Don Canal. From the USSR Council of Ministers decree (postanovleniye) of 10 Jun 53 we learn that 152.1 million cubic meters of earth were excavated on the Volga-Don project.
6. In his article, the Pravda correspondent points out the unsatisfactory attitude toward the project on the part of Party, Government and agricultural officials of the Kazakh SSR and in particular those of the West Kazakhstan and Gurev oblasts. In addition, many of the managerial personnel do not know the purpose of the canal.

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